

# SEATON SLUICE FIRST SCHOOL

## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY 2024-25

### Rationale

“It is vital that we get to know and value all young children. All children learn more in the period from birth to five years old than any other time in their lives. If children are at risk of falling behind the majority, the best time to help them catch up and keep up is in the early years. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support.”

“When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we can give them what they need tomorrow. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow”

(Development Matters 2020)

At Seaton Sluice First School, the Early Years Foundation Stage is recognised as a distinctive phase of education which integrates the care and education of our youngest children. We are committed to developing trusting and supportive partnerships with all of our families and stakeholders; this is vital so we can fully understand, get to know and provide the very best of experiences for each pupil. We firmly believe that all children are unique and bring with them a diverse range of previous experiences and learning which must be acknowledged and built upon. It is vital that parents are valued as children’s first educators and that they are active partners in their child’s school education; together we can give our children the best start in life.

### Our Core Purpose

At Seaton Sluice First School, we provide highly effective teaching and learning within a culture of challenge, nurture and support. We provide opportunities to enable all children to progress to be the best they can be, through well-planned play and structured activities, both indoors and outside, children can inquire and develop a range of skills that will help them move through life and school. Our engaging story-based curriculum provides a rich learning experience and promotes creativity, independence, and a lifelong love for reading and learning so that as many children as possible can achieve a Good Level of Development by the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). From this foundation, we build learning upon in subsequent years.

### Principles

Our EYFS policy is directly related to our school vision, values and Early Years philosophy. It documents further aims and strategies we employ in order to address the four overarching principles of EYFS:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independently through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers.
- We recognise the importance of all areas of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in EYFS, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

**Effective Practice in relation to each of the four overarching principles of EYFS, the seven key features of effective practice and the characteristics of effective teaching and learning is detailed in the Statutory framework for the early years' foundation stage (link below)**

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[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Our carefully planned curriculum, quality interactions and use of assessment ensures that we address the **seven key features of effective practice**:

- Providing the best for every child.
- Offering consistent, high-quality care for all of our children.
- Planning a story-led curriculum with a focus on what we want children to learn.
- Using a range of different approaches to ensure our pedagogy is effective in helping children to learn.

- Implementing a range of assessment strategies to check what children have learnt in order to inform future planning.
- Supporting children to develop their self-regulation and executive function.
- Developing a strong partnership with parents through positive and regular communications.

### The Areas of Teaching and Learning

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected sections. The **prime areas** are seen as particularly important for **igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning**, and for **building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive**.

#### The 3 prime areas are:

- **Communication and language**

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

- **Physical development**

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

- **Personal, social and emotional development**

- Self-regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through **4 specific areas:**

- **Literacy**

- Comprehension - Word reading
- Writing

- **Mathematics**

- Numbers
- Numerical patterns

- **Understanding the world**

- Past and present
- People, culture and communities - The natural world

- **Expressive arts and design**

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

We recognise that teaching can take place at **all** times of the day through directed teaching sessions, through times of play both inside and outside the classroom. We

encourage and facilitate all of these. We strive to make our environments exciting to children and encourage our staff and volunteers to seize every opportunity for teaching. Weekly and daily planning formalise this and aim to ensure a balance of formal and informal learning. Staff are encouraged to think carefully about their interactions, questions and interventions in children's learning in order to optimise this. **Children will be intrinsically motivated to be life-long readers and learners.**

At appropriate opportunities, the adults use the ShREC approach to interact with children:

- **Share** attention - Showing genuine interest in what a young child is focused on is a powerful way to establish a connection. It lets them know that you value them and want to spend time with them. By getting down to their level and engaging in their choice of activity, you can tune in and crucially pay attention to what they look at, what they do, and what they say. Sensitively joining in with a child's play motivates children to communicate with you.
- **Respond** - How we respond to a child once we have established joint engagement is dependent on our knowledge of them as a unique individual.
- **Expand** - Once the 'back and forth' rally of engagement is getting underway: the adult and child are sharing attention, the adult is responsively following the child's lead. This is where modelling and scaffolding begins with the adult pitching their language just above the level of the child.
- **Conversation** - Sustained back and forth conversations that involve many turns are the goal. The beauty and power of conversation is that it offers children an opportunity to practise talking and to receive feedback from an adult. To encourage rich back and forth conversations, comment more, question less. It is important to note that questions can be useful in helping children to cue turn-taking in conversation. Consider how to use questions sparingly so they are most effective. 'WH' and open questions are the most useful as they invite children to elaborate. As children's conversational skills develop, adults can sensitively challenge children, shaping the conversation to incorporate more abstract topics that are removed from the here and now.

This might look like:

- Extending vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encouraging independence
- Adding resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner
- Demonstrating, modelling and working alongside the children
- Helping children to see links in their learning
- Supporting and encouraging children
- Encouraging children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators
- Helping children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Promoting children's well-being
- Observing and assessing learning
- Recording judgments and plan for next steps in learning
- Providing feedback to other adult and/or parents and carers
- Ensuring the environment is safe and secure and that the safeguarding requirements are in firmly in place.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We uphold the view that learning is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners are expected to reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

### **The 3 characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:**

- **playing and exploring** where children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** when children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** providing opportunities for children to share and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

All of these areas interlink throughout the curriculum and adults make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop their playing, thinking and learning. Adults also recognise that there are times when they need to take a step back to enable children to think critically and solve a problem by trial and error or perseverance.

It is our aim that children leave the EYFS with:

- a positive 'can do' attitude to learning
- a willingness to take risks and make mistakes
- high levels of engagement in a task where they can practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills • perseverance
- a love of learning
- a love of reading and sharing stories
- ideas of their own, that they can plan and follow through
- an ability to express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

### **Early Language, Reading and Mathematics**

At Seaton Sluice First School, we provide a language-rich environment in which high quality talk and interactions are valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other. For early phonics teaching, the school follows the 'Little Wandle' phonics scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge, so phonics is the only strategy used for decoding. The children start in Nursery tuning into sounds and taking library books home to share with their families. When they move into Reception they initially take home wordless books which develop excellent language skills and the mechanics of reading a story. When they are ready they move on to Little Wandle reading books. The books that they bring home will have been read with the children 3 times in school so they will be familiar with them. This ensures that they can decode, understand the story and read with prosody. The Little Wandle reading books they bring home the children should be able to read with ease and confidence.

The school also places an importance on the development of early comprehension skills; in line with the Revised Framework to ensure that children are able to comprehend what they read and listen to. This sits alongside the development of children's speaking, listening and language skills which are crucial for developing children's comprehension and vocabulary, with a specific focus on closing the vocabulary gap for children starting school with less experience of a language rich environment. Our curriculum promotes a love of reading through carefully chosen focus books which develop key concepts of learning, several story times a day and carefully chosen books within the learning environment with familiar books that the children have listened to and enjoyed together.

Teachers closely monitor children's progress in reading through weekly guided reading sessions and regular phonics assessments in order that interventions are implemented to address gaps in learning promptly. Advice is sought from the reading lead teacher, the SENCO or the local authority Literacy adviser where these do not prove successful.

Maths is taught through a range of experiences including counting as part of the daily routine; discreet teaching with follow up group activities and play based opportunities and experiences through the learning environment. We recognise that Maths can take place in any environment and we promote the use of learning maths skills through play-based opportunities. As a school we have adopted the 'Mastering the Curriculum' approach to our maths teaching, which ensures progression and coverage throughout the year, starting right the way from Nursery. All children also take part in 'number talk' sessions to develop their maths oracy, focusing on the concepts of see, notice and wonder. All children within Reception, Year 1 and 2 also access additional learning in maths through the 'Mastering Number' programme to cement a strong foundation of number.

As with phonics, children experiencing any difficulties are identified early and support measures are put into place. Teachers target specific questions at individuals in whole class teaching, extending the children's understanding, allowing key mathematical concepts to be revisited and developed across the year.

## **Play**

We believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning through play. We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes, their play will be lively and interactive, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals, the desired outcomes for the end of the EYFS.

## **Planning**

The class teachers are responsible for the planning for Nursery and Reception pupils, based on the EYFS statutory Framework. The curriculum includes expectations and routines, experiential (play) learning, and deliberate (enhanced)

learning, and includes a high-quality, broad, and balanced educational experience for all children in our community.

**Expectations and Routines:** We have high expectations of our children at Seaton Sluice First School as we believe children thrive in environments with clear routines. They are the building blocks to promoting independence, emotional regulation and a positive classroom culture. This foundation enhances children's immediate well-being and also prepares them for future academic and personal success.

**Language:** chatting, playing and reading with children every day helps them learn lots of new words. Language is the foundation of children's thinking. Children who are good communicators at five are most likely to be successful learners throughout their time in school. Our practitioners understand the importance of high-quality interactions in supporting children's development. We use positive, sensitive, and responsive language that promotes children's communication, listening and concentration skills.

**Experiential (play) Learning:** Children need uninterrupted time to play through hands on experiences, exploration and discovery. It involves children actively engaging with their environment, materials and social interactions to make sense of the world around them. Our staff will often get involved, in a sensitive way, to help the children to learn whilst they are playing. They will think about the important knowledge children need and how they can learn this whilst they are playing.

**Deliberate (enhanced) Learning:** Adults plan and guide the children's play, this deliberate learning complements our experiential learning by providing structured opportunities for children to acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding. Whole class, group and individual activities are used to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate. This learning is often based around our key books and further develops a love of reading, Little Wandle phonics and Master the Curriculum maths.

## **Assessment**

At Seaton Sluice First School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and carers. The Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first four weeks of a child starting in Reception. We also use a range of assessments, both formative and summative, with individual pupils at various points including Little Wandle phonics assessments.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- meeting expected levels of development
- not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions among teachers working with the children. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority (LA) in the summer term when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department. We formally report to parents three times a year, in October and March in the form of parental consultations and in July, with a written summary, containing information about **how** each child learns and an assessment against each of the seven areas of learning.

### Safety

At Seaton Sluice First School, we believe children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. Children's safety and welfare is paramount to us. We create a safe, secure and welcoming environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies in place to safeguard children and daily procedures are in place to encourage children to operate in safe ways and to keep them safe. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, free fruit and milk (under they turn 5yrs). We also follow set school procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

### Inclusion

We value all of our children as unique individuals at Seaton Sluice First School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We use stories to give children an experience of a wide range of all of the above.

We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children meet the expected levels of development against the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

At times, it is necessary to work with children in a small group or on an individual basis outside of the learning environment to allow for specialist input such as speech and language support. However, whenever possible, support is provided within the classroom context.

### Relationships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

We know what an important role parents and carers play in their children's learning journey and we aim to involve them as much as possible in school life. We recognise



the huge contribution that parents make to their child's learning and we work hard to develop and sustain links with parents. We seek to start building relationships with parents from the term before their child starts school, through clear communication and the initial stay and play and information sessions. We do this in a range of different ways, which range from communication with home to inviting parents into the school setting. These include:

- An Introductory 'welcome' session
- Stay and play sessions
- Reading books shared between home and school
- Ongoing sharing of learning through the Class Dojo App
- Fortnightly newsletters
- Updating the EYFS sections on the school website
- Parent workshops such as 'the teaching of phonics'
- Reading diaries
- Communication books (if required for some pupils)
- End of year report
- Parents consultations

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings, for example to the local library or church, and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Working with other services and organisations is also integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times, we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

## Transition

At Seaton Sluice First School, we work closely with families, the local pre-schools and childminders to ensure that we have detailed information about the children prior to them starting school.

When a child starts our Nursery, they are invited to attend a 'Stay and Play' event the term before they are due to start. The children and their families are then invited into school again for another 'Stay and Play' event the day before they are due to start. On their first day children stay 8.45 - 10.15 and build in one hour blocks each day. Should a child find this transition too quick and are not settled, we will work with families to support the child.

When a child starts our Reception, our SENCO and Reception teacher meet with key staff of a child's previous setting and observe the children whilst in the setting in the summer term prior to the children starting school. We also invite the new to school children to join us for up to three sessions in the summer term. The children are then organised into staggered groups for the first week in the Autumn term. By week 2, all children are settled into school on a full-time basis. Again, should a child find this transition too quick and are not settled, we will work with families to support the child.

As the children prepare to enter KS1, the Year 1 teacher observes the children in the Early Years setting during the summer term, often coming down to share stories with them at the end of the day. The Early Years staff also meet with the Year 1 staff to discuss the end of year data within a Pupil Progress Meeting in order to ensure a smooth transition into Year 1. These discussions help the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. The children will also spend an afternoon with their new teacher in the Year 1 classroom prior to the end of the Summer term.

### Organisation of school day

Both Nursery and Reception's school day begins at **8:45am**.

Children **only attending the morning Nursery sessions** should be collected at **12:15pm** from the Nursery gate. For those accessing **funded 30-hours weekly provision**, collection is at **3:00pm** from the Nursery door. Nursery children do get more weekly time than they are entitled to as this ensures that we can accommodate our phased start and also honour the correct number of hours (15/30 hrs 38 weeks of the year). For children in **Nursery**, a **packed lunch** should be provided by parents/carers for **all children**.

For children in **Reception**, the end of the school day is **3:15pm**. Children should be collected from the individual class entrances, on the back of the school site.

**Universal meals** are funded for all pupils from **Reception to Year 2**. Details of our school meals provider, **DOLCE**, are available on the school website and will be included within each child's 'welcome pack'.

### Wraparound Care

Children from **Reception** are able to access Breakfast Club (8:00am-8:45am) and After-School Club (3:15pm-5:30pm). Details of wraparound care, including booking arrangements and costs are available from the school office. Please email Mrs Johnson, our school Administrative Assistant at [admin@seatonsluicefirst.co.uk](mailto:admin@seatonsluicefirst.co.uk) for more information.